

# Westway and Imperium Expansion Projects



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### Questions and Answers

This document includes frequently asked questions for the proposed projects and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process. These answers are summarized and do not include all of the details or analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statements (EISs). The Draft EISs are the documents of record for the environmental review.

#### What's the purpose of this EIS process?

If a proposed project is likely to result in significant adverse environmental impacts, the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires that an environmental impact statement (EIS) be prepared. The analysis in the EISs provides the public and decision-makers with factual and objective information about possible impacts of the projects, and how the impacts can be reduced or avoided.

The Westway and Imperium Expansion Projects Draft EISs were prepared by a third-party consultant, under the direction of the City of Hoquiam (Hoquiam) and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology).

#### Does the EIS approve or deny the projects?

No, an EIS is a reference document. It provides factual information and thorough evaluation of a proposed project's likely impacts on the natural and built environment. The information helps local and state agencies with permit decisions, and helps the companies and the public understand how these projects may affect the environment.

#### What happens to this EIS process now that Imperium has been sold?

The Imperium facility was sold to the Renewable Energy Group (REG) on August 19, 2015. REG told the agencies the project will continue as proposed. No changes to the Draft EIS analysis are expected as a result of the sale.

#### Do the crude oil facility moratoriums in Hoquiam and Aberdeen affect these projects?

The moratoriums were passed after these projects were proposed and do not prohibit consideration of the proposals. The City of Hoquiam is considering a land use plan amendment to forbid wholesale liquefied petroleum facilities in any zone within the City of Hoquiam. The moratorium would prohibit permitting future storage and sale facilities. The City of Aberdeen has adopted a similar moratorium. The moratorium and changes to the land use plan do not affect these projects that are now under review.

#### What did the studies look at for rail transportation impacts?

The studies focused on the changes the PS&P rail line could see in detail, and in general for the main rail lines in Washington. The additional trains for the projects would nearly double the current traffic on the PS&P rail line, but would be a relatively small percentage of trains on the main lines. Trains carrying crude oil and bulk liquids already travel along the main lines.

#### Why is the study area for vessel impacts only Grays Harbor?

All ships and barges for the proposed projects must travel through Grays Harbor. Once outside of Grays Harbor, they could go many different places. So the studies looked at impacts from vessel traffic in Grays Harbor in detail, and along the Washington coast and Puget Sound more generally.

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### **Did you consider all of the crude oil projects proposed in Grays Harbor?**

Yes. The studies evaluated the potential impacts of all three proposed crude oil projects at the Port of Grays Harbor: the Westway Expansion Project, the Imperium Terminal Services Expansion Project, and the Grays Harbor Rail Terminal Expansion Project. The combined impacts were studied to find what impacts could happen if all three projects were approved and operated at full capacity.

### **Do the studies look at the economic impacts of the projects?**

Analyzing economic impacts in an EIS is not a requirement under SEPA, but Hoquiam's Municipal Code does require analysis of economic impacts. The studies found construction could temporarily stimulate the economy and result in various tax revenues for state and local governments. Operations could result in increased employment and spending. The studies estimated the annual economic output of the proposed projects in Grays Harbor County at \$19.9 million for Westway and \$77.8 million for Imperium. The studies found Westway could generate an estimated 36 direct jobs, and Imperium could generate 103 direct jobs.

### **How could the proposed projects affect air quality?**

The studies found construction, project operations at the terminal, and rail and vessel operations could increase air emissions, but the increases would not exceed local, state, or national standards for air quality. Increased rail traffic between Poynor Rail Yard and the project sites could expose nearby parks and homes to higher levels of diesel emissions. The studies recommend installing equipment near the facilities to monitor air quality. If the levels are found to exceed the standards, actions to reduce the emissions could be required.

### **Could greenhouse gases increase as a result of the proposed projects?**

The studies found construction, operation, and transportation for the proposed projects would emit greenhouse gases. The United States and Washington State have set goals for reducing greenhouse gases in the future. The total estimated increased emissions for each facility represents less than 0.0013% of the national U.S. 2025 goal and less than 0.1% of the state 2050 goal.

### **Could there be impacts to salmon or shellfish?**

The studies found the increased vessel traffic would not substantially affect fish or shellfish. In the case of an oil or hazardous material spill to water, fish and shellfish could be affected. The severity would depend on the circumstances. The facilities would be required to have stormwater permits for construction and operations, which limit the amount of pollutants that can enter the water and affect salmon or shellfish.

### **Could the proposals affect fishing or oyster harvesting?**

The increased number of ships moving in Grays Harbor could impact fishing and shell fishing in Grays Harbor but impacts on recreational and commercial fishers are expected to be low. Ships for the proposed projects are expected to use the navigation channel and would not likely affect boats outside of this area. The fishing area near Terminal 1 could likely be impacted because ships would be there more often. The studies recommend setting up a system where vessel transits would be announced over the Very High Frequency (VHF) radio so that boats would have time to safely move out of the navigation channel.

### **Could there be impacts on marine mammals?**

Increased vessel traffic could increase the chance of striking marine mammals in the harbor or while they are moving out into coastal waters, but the risk is low. The studies found underwater noise and vibration are not

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expected to harm marine mammals. If there was an oil or hazardous material spill, marine mammals could be affected, depending on the circumstances.

### **Could the project affect the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival?**

Westway and Imperium have volunteered to stop transferring crude oil to vessels for the two weeks overlapping with the festival each year. This could further reduce the risk of a spill to water that could affect shorebirds during this period.

### **Could the proposed projects increase noise in the area?**

During construction, pile driving is expected to cause the most noise. The closest homes to the project sites are about 1,500 feet away, but the noise level is not expected to be significant at that distance. Construction activities, including pile driving would only occur during daytime hours. Noise from facility operations is expected to be similar to the existing levels at the port.

The studies found the increased number of trains could increase noise, mainly from train horns at road crossings. These horns are for safety to let cars and people know the trains are approaching. Homes near the rail line between Satsop and Elma and in Central Park, Malone-Porter and Centralia could be most affected, and the average noise increases in these areas could be substantial. The studies recommend creating Quiet Zones to reduce noise, but impacts could remain.

### **Do the proposed projects require expansion of the PS&P rail line?**

No, the PS&P rail line would not need to expand for these proposals. The Westway and Imperium projects together would add about 3.25 train trips (full and empty) a day to the 3 train trips a day that happen now. The studies found the PS&P rail line can accommodate up to 12 trips per day with its existing infrastructure, so no additional construction is needed.

### **Did the studies look at the safety of the rail line?**

Yes. The studies found the PS&P rail line meets or exceeds the requirements for safe rail operations set by the Federal Rail Administration. The studies identify rail improvements made by PS&P in 2014, which include bridge repairs and replacing track. PS&P has also made plans to replace ties, rails, and other infrastructure in the future.

### **What do these projects mean for traffic at Olympic Gateway Plaza?**

The studies found the increase in train traffic could increase the average daily time that street crossings are blocked. The wait times are expected to be worst during rush hour. The current amount of time that the railroad crossings in the Olympic Gateway Plaza area are blocked on an average day ranges from 49 to 70 minutes in a 24-hour period. This range could increase to 96 to 112 minutes per day for the Westway project, and 108 to 138 minutes for the Imperium project.

Because project trains are longer than current trains in the area, the proposed projects could increase the amount of time that all crossings into and out of the Olympic Gateway Plaza and Port of Grays Harbor areas are blocked. Trains currently occupy all crossings in the Olympic Gateway Plaza area for about 35 minutes four times per week. With the projects, this could increase to 45 minutes each time and happen four more times a week for Westway and seven more times a week for Imperium. In the Port area, trains currently occupy crossings up to 13 minutes at a time. With the projects, this could increase up to 22 minutes for Westway and

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77 minutes for Imperium. The studies recommend the companies work with agencies responsible for traffic to find ways to reduce the possible impacts. If the impacts cannot be reduced, they will be identified as unavoidable and significant impacts in the final EISs.

### **Could trains block ambulances and emergency responders?**

Street crossings could be blocked, which could delay ambulances and emergency responders. These delays happen now, but could happen more frequently with the increase in trains. The areas where the projects could have the greatest impact on emergency service responders could be at intersections along the Olympic Gateway Plaza west towards the project sites. There is paved access to the plaza that can be used by emergency responders. In Centralia there are emergency responders on both sides of the track who would be able to respond. The studies recommend Westway and Imperium provide advance notice of incoming trains, including stoppages, to first responders.

### **What is the risk of a crude oil spill from a train derailment?**

Preventing a spill is the best way to reduce impacts to the environment or humans. The studies recommend several measures to prevent spills from rail cars and to improve responses to incidents. While the chance of a large spill happening is unlikely, if it did occur there would be the potential for severe impacts to the environment or humans.

Under the proposals, crude oil trains would move along the main rail line in Washington and along the PS&P rail line. Crude oil trains currently travel along the main lines, but do not travel on the PS&P line from Centralia to Grays Harbor. There are risks of derailments occurring along the rail lines, some of which could result in an oil spill. An important factor in the chance of a derailment resulting in a spill is the speed of the train. The PS&P rail line has a maximum speed of 25 miles per hour with several areas of slower speeds, so the likelihood of a rail car rupturing and spilling oil exists, but is less likely than at high speeds. Trains could also spill oil through leaks where the oil could be released along the rail line.

### **What are the risks of an explosion from a crude oil train?**

An explosion is most likely to occur when a train travelling at high speed derails and there is enough energy to generate a spark. Only a small number of derailments result in spills and only some of these result in fires or explosions. As explained above, train speeds along the PS&P rail line are limited to 25 miles per hour or less, so the likelihood of a fire or explosion is reduced. The studies found small spills could occur more frequently, but these would have a low likelihood of a fire or explosion. A large spill could have a greater likelihood of a fire or explosion.

Preventing a spill is the best way to reduce the risk of an explosion. The studies recommend several measures to prevent spills or explosions from rail cars and to improve responses to incidents. While the chance of a fire or explosion happening is unlikely, if it did occur there could be the potential for severe impacts to the environment or humans.

### **Were the impacts from a tsunami considered?**

The studies evaluated potential impacts based on a moderate event and a large event related to the Cascadia Subduction Zone fault in the Pacific Ocean off the Washington Coast. Washington State currently uses a moderate event as the basis for its tsunami hazard mapping. This scenario could result in a moderate-size tsunami wave. A large event, while much less likely, could result in a large tsunami wave. The studies looked at



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how such an event might affect tanks on the facilities and potential environmental impacts. The new storage tanks could become damaged and contribute to tsunami debris or leak crude oil or other bulk liquids. The current building code requirements do not address the large tsunami scenario. The studies recommend an engineering study to identify possible construction measures for the larger event.

### **What could happen in an earthquake?**

The extent of earthquake damage would depend on the magnitude of the event. Buildings must be designed to meet local building codes and standards that consider earthquakes. For the proposed tanks, pilings would be driven into the ground to stabilize the storage tank area in the case of an earthquake. While the chance of a large earthquake happening is unlikely, if it did occur there could be the potential for severe impacts to the environment or humans.

### **What happens if there is a spill at the facility?**

The studies identified the risks of spills happening during facility operations, including while moving oil to and from trains and vessels, and from worst case scenarios like a storage tank rupture. There are federal and state requirements for facilities that handle oil and hazardous materials, like specialized equipment, personnel training, and preparing for a spill. This includes designing areas to contain spills from train cars when they are being loaded or unloaded and to contain spills from the storage tanks.

The facilities are required to have plans to respond to spills with equipment and contractors in place. The studies identified other measures that could improve safety and response actions. While the chance of a large spill happening is unlikely, if it did occur there could be the potential for severe impacts to the environment or humans.

### **Could explosions happen at the facilities?**

The studies identified the risks of fires and explosions at the facilities. These incidents could occur as a result of a spill or from flammable vapors. However, not all spills would result in fires or explosions. Preventive measures like removing ignition sources and using non-sparking equipment reduce the risk of a fire or explosion in the case of a spill. The storage tanks must be designed to reduce any flammable vapors that could ignite. The proposals include installing marine vapor combustion units that remove flammable gases and reduce the risk of fire or explosion. The studies identified other measures that could improve safety and response actions. While the chance of a fire or explosion happening is unlikely, if it did occur there would be the potential for severe impacts to the environment or humans.

### **What if there is a large spill from a vessel while it is in Grays Harbor?**

The studies identified the risk of spills from vessel in Grays Harbor if there was an incident like striking the jetty or grounding. Tankers and tank barges that carry oil are required to have double-hulls, which provide a buffer area between the outside of the ship and tanks with oil.

If a spill occurs, the vessel operator must notify federal and state agencies and activate their oil spill contingency plan to get equipment and personnel to the area. The studies recommend having tug boats escort loaded tankers and tank barges to help reduce the risk of an incident that could result in a spill. While the chance of a large spill happening is unlikely, if one did occur there would be the potential for severe impacts to the environment or humans.

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### **What happens if a spill along the rail line reaches the Chehalis River?**

The studies identified the risk of a spill from a train along the PS&P rail line. Depending on the location of a spill, oil could enter the Chehalis River. The studies looked at how far oil could move during a low river flow and at high flow. If a spill occurs, whoever is responsible for the spill must respond with the appropriate equipment and people to stop the spill, and begin cleanup. State and federal agencies will take action if the responsible party does not take appropriate action. The Grays Harbor and Chehalis River Geographic Response Plans describe specific response strategies in the event of an oil spill to the Chehalis River or Grays Harbor.

### **How does a spill get cleaned up?**

Clean up methods and equipment depends on the circumstances of the spill, such as what material was spilled, how much, and where the spill occurred. Specialized equipment must be identified in advance as part of the planning process and available within certain time limits so it can contain and collect the spilled material on the ground and in the water. The party responsible for the spill is required to provide equipment and trained personnel to do the cleanup. In a spill, there is a formal system used to coordinate the cleanup with roles for local, state and federal agencies if needed. For large spills, agencies can bring in equipment and personnel from outside the area to help.

### **Who is responsible for the cleanup costs for a spill?**

Generally, the responsible party for the spill pays for costs and damages. Washington State places no limits on liability of polluters to third parties, allowing recovery of cleanup costs and natural resource damages beyond the federal limit. The federal government has established high limits on that liability.

### **When would the projects be built?**

Construction could begin only after the EISs are finalized and state and local permit processes are completed. Construction could start in 2016.

Phase 1 construction of the Imperium project, which consists of everything proposed except for four of the nine storage tanks, could last 18 months. If Imperium decides to construct the four additional storage tanks, Phase 2 construction could take an additional four months.

Phase 1 construction of the Westway project, which consists of everything proposed except for three of the five storage tanks, could last 10 to 12 months. If Westway decides to construct the remaining three tanks, Phase 2 construction could last an additional 10 months.

### **What happens to public comments? How will I get a response?**

Public comments are an important part of the environmental review process. All comments are valued equally, whether they are delivered in writing, orally at a meeting, or on line. All comments will be carefully reviewed and evaluated. Based on the comments, additional analysis may be conducted or further explanation added to the EIS. All comments received during the comment period, and the responses to those comments, will be published in the Final EISs.

Visit [www.ecy.wa.gov/GraysHarbor](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/GraysHarbor) for more information on the proposed projects.